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SUBJECT: JORDAN'S SECURITY SERVICES

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[1](#)C. C. 98 AMMAN 5677
[1](#)D. D. 03 AMMAN 893
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[1](#)M. M. 06 AMMAN 4143
[1](#)N. N. AMMAN 720

Classified By: CDA Daniel Rubinstein for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The security services, made up of the Royal Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF), the Public Security Directorate (PSD), and the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), together constitute a vital and solid pillar of the Hashemite monarchy. The security services, along with the tribes (Ref E and I) and the business elite are the three chief pillars of the regime.

Ethnicity =====

[1](#)2. (C) Since 1970, East Bankers have dominated Jordan's security services, with the few Palestinian-Jordanians present relegated to support and technical branches. This is a legacy of the "Black September" civil war of that year; much of the present leadership of the security services fought as junior officers against Palestinians in the conflict, and it shaped their views on domestic politics and Jordan's identity.

Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) =====

[1](#)3. (C) The JAF originated in the police and paramilitary forces British officers established between 1919 and 1921, who used them to maintain security for the mandate Emirate of Transjordan. British officers remained in the forces until [1](#)1956. From its humble beginnings with an authorized strength of 750, the Jordanian military grew, with British and later American support, into a professional force that now numbers approximately 110,000 in army, navy, and air force services. The current King headed Jordan's special operations forces from 1993 until his accession to the throne in 1999. His patronage led to the special forces achieving a status nearly equal to that of an independent service. Conscription ended in 1992, and the JAF is now an all-volunteer force. The Jordanian leadership has occasionally considered reviving conscription as a means of shaping the values of Jordanian youth, but has taken no concrete steps in this direction as

yet.

¶4. (C) Other members of the Royal Family hold key positions in, or are patrons of the armed forces: Prince Faisal (the King's brother) is the former chief of the Royal Jordanian Air Force, and now serves as special assistant to the Chairman of the JAF Joint Chiefs of Staff; Prince Ali (the King's half-brother) serves as a coordinator for national security and leads the Royal Guards; Princess Aisha (the King's sister) is the Director of JAF's Directorate of Military Women's Affairs; Prince Hamza (the King's half-brother) most recently served as an armor company commander; and Prince Hashim (the King's half-brother) recently served as a captain with the Royal Rangers. The royal family traditionally attends Britain's Sandhurst Military Academy and U.S. private universities for master's degrees.

¶5. (SBU) While the Prime Minister is notionally dual-hatted as the Minister of Defense, he delegates all authority over defense matters to the Chairman of the JAF Joint Chiefs. The PM in fact has no Ministry of Defense to provide any civilian oversight -- a situation that is not questioned domestically. The Chairman does defer to the PM for purposes of protocol, for example when planning a meeting between ministers of defense.

¶6. (C) Leadership: The present head of the JAF is Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Khaled Sarayreh, formerly an infantry and armor commander and Commandant of the Military Science College at Al-Mu'tah University. Sarayreh has held the chairmanship since March of 2002. He was educated at the Pakistani National Defense College in Rawalpindi and the Command and Staff College in Quetta. Sarayreh comes from the small Sarayreh tribe, traditionally located southeast of the Dead Sea.

¶7. (S) Challenges: Since coming to the throne, King Abdullah has been working successfully toward modernizing and reducing the size of the military. The military recently concluded a Strategic Defense Review, which recommends further reductions in force, and a move toward lighter forces with an emphasis on expanding the size of special operations units (Ref J). The JAF's efforts to implement its new force structure plans and live within a limited budget reduce its usefulness as a political patronage tool, but the military's loyalty to the monarchy has been very solid for more than a generation. Occasional discordant notes have been minor. In May and June 2006, senior JAF officers, including general officers, openly criticized King Abdullah in front of official Americans. The soldiers pointedly questioned the government's claim that the discovery in Jordan of alleged Hamas weapons caches was the real reason for the cancellation of a visit by the Palestinian Foreign Minister Zahar (Ref K). The soldiers' remarks mirrored the skepticism of Jordanian society in general, but were notable as the first time in recent memory that Jordanian soldiers have questioned their monarch within earshot of official Americans.

¶8. (S) Politics and Society: Jordanian soldiers are barred from participating in politics, including voting, and we are aware of no recent cases in which the authorities have discovered Islamist political activity in the ranks. Many Jordanian military officers will drink alcohol at small functions with American military colleagues. The JAF seeks to pre-empt the appearance of political Islam in the ranks through the Directorate of Military Security's intelligence operations and investigations, and with education programs and publications from the Directorate of Morale Guidance.

Public Security Directorate (PSD)
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¶9. (C) Jordan's national police force is the Public Security Directorate (PSD). There are no local or governorate-level security forces. The PSD separated from the Army in 1958, and is comprised of 42,000 personnel. On paper, PSD's Director reports to the Minister of Interior, but in practice

reports directly to the King. The current and last two PSD directors have come from senior ranks of the JAF. The PSD's Deputy Director and the Assistant Director for Operations and Training also came from senior ranks of the JAF. The PSD is charged with maintaining law and order, internal security/riot control, traffic control, VIP and foreign mission protection, counternarcotics, prisons and rehabilitation centers, drivers' licenses and vehicle registrations, and border security for the Badia area in northeast Jordan and for all ports of entries. The size and roles of the PSD have increased in recent years to address the challenges posed by terrorism. PSD has an elite counter terrorism group, Unit 14, which works closely with JAF's Special Operations Command.

¶10. (C) Leadership: Lieutenant General Mohammad Majed al-Eitan serves as the Director of PSD. A former military man and member of the large Bani Hassan tribe (Refs E and I), Eitan headed the Jordanian Special Operations Command from 2000 to 2002, and was appointed the Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence from 2002 until his appointment as Director of PSD in 2004. Eitan had worked closely with the King during their joint tenures in JAF's Special Operations Command. Eitan received a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies from Pakistan's National Defense College and attended the Pakistani Command and Staff College.

¶11. (C) Challenges: PSD is perceived as a service junior to JAF and GID when it comes to prestige and assistance from foreign governments. In response to the terrorist attacks of November 9, 2005, the GOJ has begun sorting out the roles and responsibilities of the interagency players in counter terrorism and border security. In these reviews, some carried out with USG assistance, PSD may take on greater and more sophisticated roles, which will have an impact on the quality of recruiting, training, organization, and equipment. Due to Jordan's heightened threat environment and the many, diverse missions serviced by the PSD, the PSD's resources and personnel have been more strained than those of the other security services in recent years.

The General Intelligence Directorate (GID)

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¶12. (S) The GID is the premier intelligence and counter terrorism service in the country. Its roles include internal and external intelligence collection, counter terrorism, and political policing. Although in principle it is subordinate to the Prime Minister, GID directors are in practice responsible to no one but the King. Technically competent and well staffed, the GID has a strong reputation in the region. Charged with regime security and stability, GID seeks to monitor all forms of communication in the country, track political movements and religious organizations, and monitor the presence and activities of foreigners. GID disrupts what are deemed as anti-regime activities through the use of threats, harassment, detention/arrest, and prosecution.

¶13. (S) The GID is strongest at home in Jordan, and is only now developing an effective foreign intelligence element. Pay for GID employees is above standard government salaries, and allows it to compete for well-qualified employees who would otherwise work in the private sector. However, some GID officers complain that rising inflation and fixed salaries make it increasingly difficult for them to maintain a middle class lifestyle (Ref L).

¶14. (C) Leadership: Director Major General Mohammad Dahabi, who comes from a family of East Banker townsmen but according to some is of Syrian origin, presently leads the GID. His loyalty to the King is unquestioned, and along with the King's Office Director Bassem Awadallah and a few select royal family members, form the innermost circle of advisors to the King. Dahabi rose to head the GID in December 2005. He had served as deputy director under Samih Asfura, who took over in May 2005 following a political challenge by his predecessor, Saad Khair. Khair, like other prominent East

Bankers, opposed some of the King's reform efforts, and in particular the King's point man for reform, the Palestinian-Jordanian Awadallah. Khair worked with traditionalist members of parliament (many of whom owed their seats to GID support) to block a vote of confidence for Awadallah as Finance Minister, leading to his departure from the cabinet in February 2005. In May of that year, the King eased Khair out of the GID directorship. Awadallah returned a few months later as an informal advisor to the King, and in April 2006 was formally named director of the King's office.

¶15. (C) Political role: The GID traditionally plays an important role in executing the palace's strategies for managing domestic politics and elections. A number of members of Parliament are GID pensioners, and, whether rightly or wrongly, political observers in Jordan assume a majority of the remaining MPs are also on the GID payroll. At election times, there are often reports that GID has provided financing to government supporters, encouraged someone to run for office in order to split the tribal support of an unfriendly candidate, or provided monetary inducements to some politicians to sit out an election.

Allegations of Corruption and Human Rights Violations

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¶16. (C) Some human rights advocates claim that elements of the GID and the PSD have engaged in corruption and acted with impunity. The GID houses the GOJ's lead investigators for government corruption. Samih Batikhi, who was GID director from 1996 to 2000, was convicted on corruption charges and jailed from 2003 to 2006, though his fall may have had as much to do with disloyalty to King Abdullah as it did with actual corruption (Ref M). UN Special Rapporteur for torture issues Manfred Nowak publicly accused GID and PSD of mistreating detainees (Ref N). Critics of U.S. counterterrorism efforts have also made unsubstantiated allegations that GID maintained "secret prisons" for the U.S.

Comment

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¶17. (C) While a few members of Jordan's security services may be unhappy with the King's political reform agenda as is the case in broader, civilian Jordanian society, the majority of security personnel remain loyal, and we are aware of no coalescing of disgruntlement or its adherents in any particular entity in the security services. All of the services have been called upon in recent years to support unpopular policies and have done so effectively. In addition, the King's own military background and his obvious interest in the security culture suggest he will continue to devote the resources and personal attention needed to keep the security services on his side.

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